

Mayors weigh in on Loop 202 issue

By Doug Murphy
Staff Writer

Last month three East Valley mayors weighed in on the South Mountain Loop 202 route debate, saying that the freeway should be built despite Ahwatukee Foothills opposition.

"With more than 6 million area residents projected by the year 2030, the South Mountain leg is a critical part of our regional freeway system," wrote Mesa Mayor Keno Hawker, Chandler Mayor Boyd Dunn and Gilbert Mayor Steve Berman in a joint letter.

In the letter, they say that once the freeway is built **more Mayors, see page 3**

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an Ahwatukee Foothills resident who worked at Metrocenter would get home 25 minutes faster, a claim not found in materials distributed by the Arizona Department of Transportation, which said such a trip would be shortened by 8.5 minutes going to Metrocenter and 12 minutes coming back.

The insinuation that they know best upset many Ahwatukee Foothills residents.

"Who designated them regional transportation experts?" asked William

Ramsey, an Ahwatukee Foothills residents who opposes the freeway.

And the fact that Hawker just recently sold his asphalt company and is still the president of Hawker Trucks and Materials, Inc. made others suspicious of his motives.

"I think it's a conflict of interest, him weighing in on this," said Richard Wall, who lives near Pecos Road and 32nd Street.

While the East Valley mayors were encouraging construction through Ahwatukee Foothills, three West Valley councils were pushing for the freeway, but asking that it not be in their backyard.

Litchfield Park, Avondale and Tolleson have all passed resolutions opposing the Loop 202 route that would cut through Tolleson and connect at the Loop 101/I-10 interchange.

If that route is selected by ADOT, the six square miles of that city would be cut in two and almost one-half of a square-mile would be paved over for the freeway.

While the East Valley mayors insist



Mayor Dunn

on the construction and the west side councils insist on construction anywhere but in their backyard, the people of Ahwatukee Foothills are stuck in the middle.

"I don't like how it's going," said Glenn Schulke, who has lived in the area almost 30 years.

He would like to see a freeway further south, to handle the current and projected traffic from Maricopa and other Pinal County cities.

"Bring it around so it is a reliever," Schulke said.

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